

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 001631

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/14/2013

TAGS: PREL PGOV TU IZ

SUBJECT: TURKISH KURDS: "WHY DO YOU NEED TURKEY?"

REF: A. ANKARA 1624

B. ANKARA 1470

C. ANKARA 1341

(U) Classified by PolCouns John Kunstadter; reasons: 1.5 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) In March 13 conversation with poloffs, a close Embassy contact and opposition CHP M.P. discussed Kurdish perspectives of a possible operation in Iraq. The M.P., a leader of the Kurdish Dostki tribe with extensive political ties in Turkey's southeast, tribal ties in Iraq, and previous service in Parliament, lamented U.S. reliance on Turkey for any operation in Iraq.

¶2. (C) He explained to us that none of his constituents or family members wants Turkish troops to deploy to Iraq. They fear an intensifying crackdown on Kurds on both sides of the border, a consequence of "the Turkish State's racist underpinnings."

¶3. (C) On the other hand, Kurds, he emphasized, will welcome U.S. troops: "we realize that the U.S. is our only friend in the world." Numerous protesters are out on the street chanting "Savasa Hayir" -- no to war, he noted. "I say, 'Savasa Evet'" (Yes to War).

¶4. (C) When poloffs tested him by noting their respect for Turkey in general and shared USG-GOT interests, our contact's face froze in a way we have seen countless times in discussing Turkey with Turkish Kurds. "Why do you need Turkey?" he asked. The Turkish State has a woeful reputation among Kurds everywhere, he noted. Turkish support for an operation would, therefore, actually harm rather than enhance USG equities in Iraq and elsewhere.

¶5. (C) Our contact is concerned that an operation in Iraq will provide an excuse for the Turkish State to re-impose OHAL (State of Emergency) or some other quasi-martial law regime in Turkey's Southeast. A legal expert on State Security Courts and member of Parliament's Justice Committee, he explained that, given well established Turkish practice: 1) the NSC (read: the military) will set the emergency rule policy; 2) the military by itself will produce the actual draft law, relying primarily on military lawyers working directly for TGS; 3) the completed draft will then be passed to the relevant Parliamentary committees, which will present the draft as their own work.

Comment

¶6. (C) These comments are particularly striking coming from a representative of the Party of Ataturk -- which is rabidly opposed to USG intervention in Iraq. On earlier occasions, our contact told us of his concern lest he be branded a "traitor" to Turkey for his support of a possible US-led war against Saddam. More important, his comments reflect what we are hearing privately from numerous other Kurdish contacts across the political spectrum (reflets and previous). Despite their different party and other affiliations, our Kurdish contacts are largely united in their conviction that the Turkish State's policy in N. Iraq and toward its own ethnically Kurdish citizens is deeply flawed and risks promoting regional instability. In this regard, they fear that the palpably pro-war sentiment of many leading Kurds will fuel Kemalist neuralgia in Ankara power centers (septel).
PEARSON